



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
United States Patent and Trademark Office  
Address: COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS AND TRADEMARKS  
Washington, D.C. 20231  
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/764,572	01/18/2001	Eva Ackerman	041443-00752	6865

22904 7590 12/31/2002  
LOCKE LIDDELL & SAPP LLP  
600 TRAVIS  
3400 CHASE TOWER  
HOUSTON, TX 77002-3095

EXAMINER

PATEL, DHIRUBHAI R

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
----------	--------------

2831

DATE MAILED: 12/31/2002

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

# Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/764,572

Applicant(s)

ACKERMAN ET AL.

Examiner

DHIRU R PATEL

Art Unit

2831

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

## Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

## Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 10 October 2002.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

## Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 23-36 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 23-36 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

## Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

## Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- \* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

## Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s) \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_.

Art Unit: 2831

### Part III DETAILED ACTION

#### *Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102*

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

(e) the invention was described in-

(1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effect under this subsection of a national application published under section 122(b) only if the international application designating the United States was published under Article

21(2)(a) of such treaty in the English language; or

(2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that a patent shall not be deemed filed in the United States for the purposes of this subsection based on the filing of an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a).

1. Claims 23-28, and 30-36 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Rose (6,252,167).

Assembly of the device of Rose comprises the method steps of;

Regarding claim 23, a) providing a gasket 24 (a support, see fig 5, column 3 lines 60-67, column 7 lines 45-50) comprising fire retardant material (intumescent material, see column 3

Art Unit: 2831

lines 55-67); b) placing the fire retardant gasket 24 between a faceplate 26 (a cover plate, see fig 5, column 5 lines 15-26, column 5 lines 60-67, column 8 lines 10-26) and an electrical box 12 (see fig 5, column 5 lines 15-26, column 8 lines 10-26) adapted to be introduced into a barrier 16 (wall, see fig 1, column 3 lines 35-40); c) coupling the faceplate 26 to the box 12 ( see figs 1 and 5, column 5 lines 15-26, column 8 lines 10-15) ; and d) at least partially reestablishing a fire rating of the barrier (see fig 1).

Regarding claim 30, a) providing a gasket 24 (a support, see fig 5, column 3 lines 60-67, column 7 lines 45-50) comprising intumescent material (see column 3 lines 55-67); b) placing the intumescent gasket 24 between a faceplate 26 (a cover plate, see fig 5, column 5 lines 15-26, column 5 lines 60-67, column 8 lines 10-26) and an electrical box 12 (see fig 5, column 5 lines 15-26, column 8 lines 10-26) adapted to be introduced into a barrier 16 (wall, see fig 1, column 3 lines 35-40); c) coupling the faceplate 26 to the box 12 ( see figs 1 and 5, column 5 lines 15-26, column 8 lines 10-15) ; and d) at least partially reestablishing a fire rating of the barrier (see fig 1).

Regarding claim 35, a) providing a faceplate 26 (a cover plate, see fig 5, column 5 lines 15-26, column 5 lines 60-67, column 8 lines 10-26) for an electrical box 12 (see fig 5, column 5 lines 15-26, column 8 lines 10-26) adapted to be introduced into a barrier 16 (wall, see fig 1, column 3 lines 35-40) ; b) forming a gasket 24 (a support, see fig 5, column 3 lines 60-67, column 7 lines 45-62) on the faceplate 26 (see fig 1, column 4 lines 21-41, column 8 lines 5-20), the gasket 24 comprising fire retardant material (intumescent material, see column 3 lines

Art Unit: 2831

60-67); c) coupling the faceplate 26 to the box 12 ( see figs 1 and 5, column 5 lines 15-26 column 8 lines 10-15); and d) at least partially reestablishing a fire rating of the barrier (see fig 1).

Regarding claims 24 and 31, further comprising coupling the gasket 24 (see fig 5) in situ between the faceplate 26 and the box 12 (see fig 5, column 5 lines 15-26, column 8 lines 10-26).

Regarding claims 25 and 32, providing the gasket 24 comprises forming the gasket 24 as a separate element (see fig 5, column 3 lines 65-67, column 4 lines 1-5, column 5 lines 60-65 and column 6 lines 60-63) prior to placing the gasket 24 between the faceplate 26 and the box 12 (see fig 5, column 5 lines 15-26, and column 5 lines 60-67).

Regarding claims 26 and 33, further comprising forming the gasket on one or more surfaces of the faceplate 26 prior to coupling the faceplate 26 to the box 12 (see column 4 lines 20-41, column 8 lines 5-20).

Regarding claims 27, 34 and 36, the gasket 24 is being formed by establishing a coating of the fire retardant material onto the faceplate 26 (see column 4 lines 21-41).

Regarding claim 28, the fire retardant material comprises intumescent material (see column see column 3 lines 60-67) .

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103 (a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

Art Unit: 2831

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

2. Claim 29 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Rose (6,252,167) in view of applicant's own admission.

Regarding claim 29, Rose disclose all the features of the claimed invention as shown above, but fails to disclose said fire retardant material comprises fire resistant insulative material. As disclosed by applicants in the specification page 6, lines 5-15, applicant's disclose that intumescent material are known to those with ordinary skill in the art including other fire retardant material include, without limitation and merely by way of further example, fire resistant insulative material such as mineral wool, ceramic fibers, and intumescent graphite. It

Art Unit: 2831

would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to provide the fire retardant material comprises fire resistant insulative material as evidenced by applicant's own admission , and it has been held to be within the general skill of a worker in the art to select a known material on the basis of its suitability for the intended use as a matter of obvious design choice. In re Leshin, 125 USPQ 416.

### ***Conclusion***

3. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Art Unit: 2831

***Response to Arguments***

4. Applicant's arguments filed on 10/10/02 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. In response to Applicant's argument (for claims 23-36) that " A claim is anticipated only if each and every element as set forth in the claims is found, either expressly or inherently described , in a single prior art reference", and the barrier recited in the present invention is designed and build to have a certain fire rating from one area on one side of the barrier to another area on another side of the barrier, and Rose does not teach, show, or suggest any fire rating of the barrier or even any barrier to a fire located outside of the box. The examiner respectfully disagrees because Rose clearly disclosed that " conventionally , intumescent materials are applied to the exterior of an item to insulate it from a fire. For example, intumescent materials have been used to create a fire resistant/retardant wrap suitable for protecting the exterior of conduits and cable trays and the like form a fire (see column 1 lines 41-46)" , and also disclosed that " the electrical box 12 being mounted adjacent to a wall 16, there is typically a small air gap 32 between the outer periphery of the electrical box 12 and the opening in the wall 16. It is preferred that the support 24 be sized to cover not only a majority of the opening in the electrical box 12, but also a majority of the air gap 32, preferably , the support 24 covers substantially all of the air gap 32 between the wall 16 and the electrical box 12 (see column 5 lines 27-34), and also disclosed that in the event of a fire, the heat generated thereby will cause the intumescent material 30 on the support 24 to begin to expand (see column 5 lines 35-37), and the



Art Unit: 2831

expending intumescent material 30 will fill the air gaps 32 between the wall 16 and the electrical box 12 (see column 5 lines 39-43), therefore, it prevent fire entering from one side of the wall 16 to another side of the wall 16. Therefore, Rose meet the claims limitations, and the rejection should be sustained. Further, the DECLARATION under 37 CFR 1.132 filed dated 10/10/02 is insufficient to overcome the rejection of claims 23-36 based upon Rose reference (for claims 23-28, 30-36), and Rose in view of applicant's own admission (for claim 29) as set forth in the last Office action because Rose clearly disclosed that " conventionally , intumescent materials are applied to the exterior of an item to insulate it from a fire, and Rose disclosed that in the event of a fire, the heat generated thereby will cause the intumescent material 30 on the support 24 to begin to expand (see column 5 lines 35-37), and the expending intumescent material 30 will fill the air gaps 32 between the wall 16 and the electrical box 12 (see column 5 lines 39-43), therefore, it prevent a fire entering from one side of the wall 16 to another side of the wall 16, therefore, Rose does suggest barrier to a fire located outside of the box. and please note that in claim 28, the fire retardant material comprises intumescent material which is same as disclose by the rose reference.

***Contact information***

5. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Dhuru Patel whose telephone number is (703) 308 -3748. The

Serial Number: 09/764572

Page 9

Art Unit: 2831

examiner can normally be reached on Mondays- Thursdays from 6:30 am to 4:00 pm. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Dean Reichard be reached at 703-308-3682. The fax number for this Group is 703-305-3431. Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application should be directed to the Group receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-0956.

Dhiru Patel  
Patent Examiner  
Group Art Unit 2831  
December 27, 2002

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Anthony Dinkins". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

ANTHONY DINKINS  
PRIMARY EXAMINER